

Pioneer engineer dies

Mr Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, the man who walked across the Nullarbor to survey the first railway route in 1907 and later supervised the construction of Eyre Highway, died this week aged 92.

Mr Drake-Brockman, an engineer, was chairman of the WA Transport Board from 1949 to 1952 and was a commissioner for the North-West.

He was the son of a former Surveyor-General,

Mr F. S. Drake-Brockman, and Grace Bussell, a pioneer woman who at the age of 16 helped rescue people from the grounded ship Georgette off the South-West coast.

Mr Drake-Brockman joined the State Public Works Department in 1903.

BRIGADIER

During the Great War he rose to the rank of brigadier, served at Gallipoli and France and won the Military Cross.

During the World War, he supervised the feasibility study and construction of a military road between Norseman and Port Pirie, later to become Eyre Highway.

From 1944 to 1949 he was assistant director of the PWD.

About 20 years ago, at the bidding of his late wife, the novelist Henrietta Drake-Brockman, he wrote an autobiogra-

phy titled "The Turning Wheel."

Despite blindness, Mr Drake-Brockman worked on tape-recording a second autobiography at the Braille Society's hostel in Victoria Park, where he has lived for the past two years.

He died at the hostel on Tuesday morning.

He left a son, a daughter and nine grandchildren.